

PLOS Academic Editor's Guide to Editorial Manager



Applies to:

[PLOS Complex Systems](#) | [PLOS Computational Biology](#) | [PLOS Digital Health](#) | [PLOS Genetics](#) | [PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases](#) | [PLOS Pathogens](#) | [PLOS Sustainability and Transformation](#)

All PLOS journals use the submission system, Editorial Manager (EM), provided by Aries Systems. Below you will find step-by-step instructions and screenshots for handling manuscripts as an Academic Editor.

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Getting Started

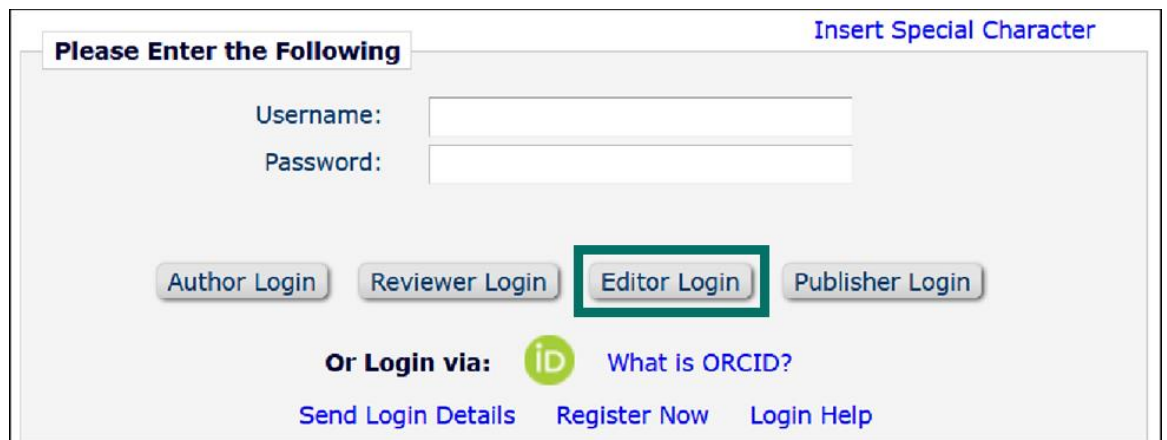
Login

- 1 Log in to your journal's Editorial Manager:

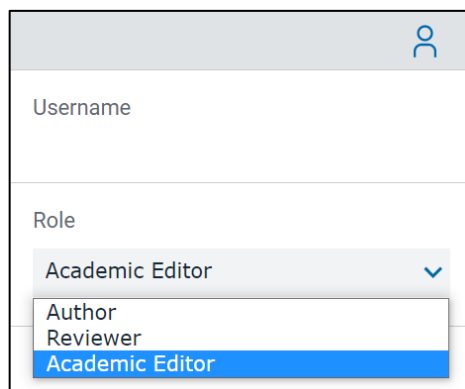
[PLOS Complex Systems](#) | [PLOS Computational Biology](#) | [PLOS Digital Health](#) | [PLOS Genetics](#) | [PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases](#) | [PLOS Pathogens](#) | [PLOS Sustainability and Transformation](#)

When you joined the Editorial Board, the Editorial Board Services team set up your profile with Academic Editor permissions.

- 2 Enter your Username and Password and click **Editor Login** to access your editor main menu.



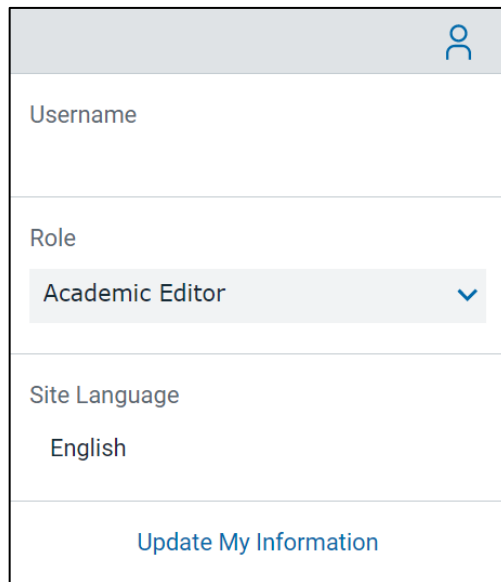
If you log into EM as a reviewer or author, you can change your role to Academic Editor using the **Role** drop down menu after clicking on your name in the top navigation bar.



Indicate Your Areas of Expertise

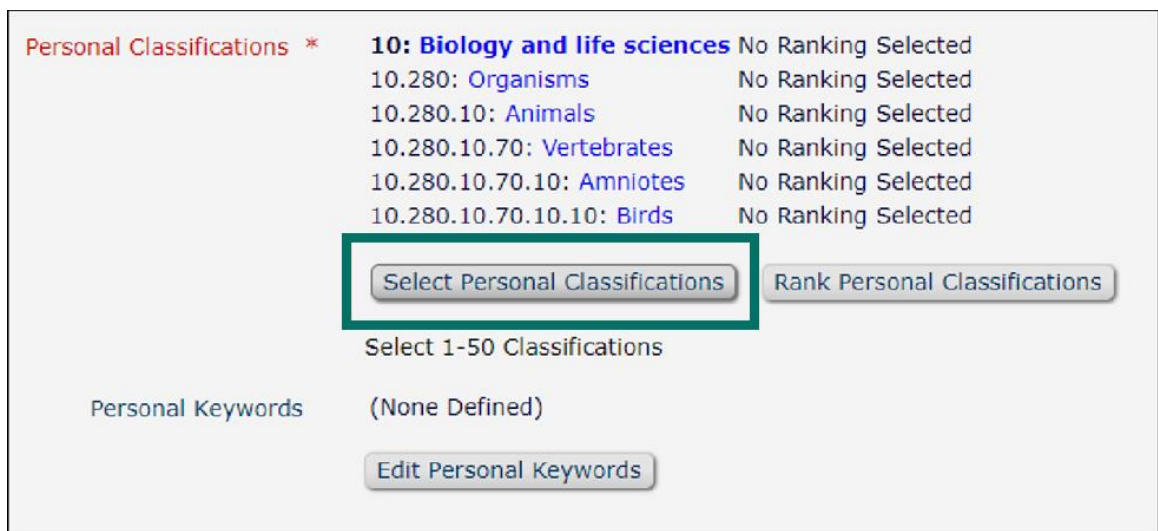
This step is critical to help match submissions to your areas of expertise. **Personal Classifications** are from the PLOS taxonomy and **Personal Keywords** are free text. Both help guide Section Editors to send you invitations in your area of expertise.

1. Click on your name in the top navigation bar then **Update My Information**



A screenshot of a user profile update form. At the top right is a user icon. The form has four sections: 'Username' (empty), 'Role' (a dropdown menu with 'Academic Editor' selected), 'Site Language' (set to 'English'), and a blue 'Update My Information' button at the bottom.

2. Navigate to **Areas of Interest or Expertise** and indicate your areas of expertise using **Personal Classifications** and **Personal Keywords**.
3. Click **Select Personal Classifications**.

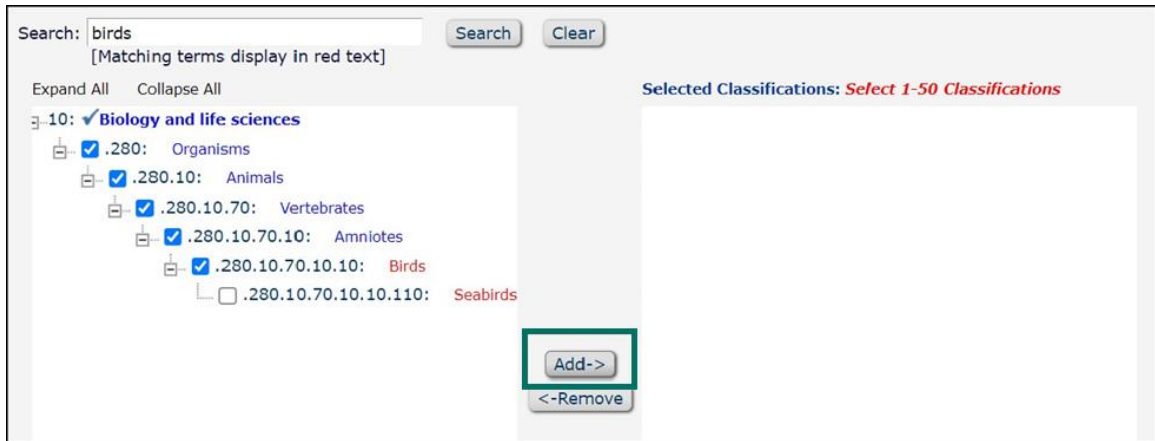


A screenshot of the 'Personal Classifications' selection interface. It shows a list of taxonomy terms with their corresponding 'No Ranking Selected' status. A green box highlights the 'Select Personal Classifications' button. Below the list, there is a 'Rank Personal Classifications' button and a 'Select 1-50 Classifications' instruction. The 'Personal Keywords' section shows '(None Defined)' and an 'Edit Personal Keywords' button.

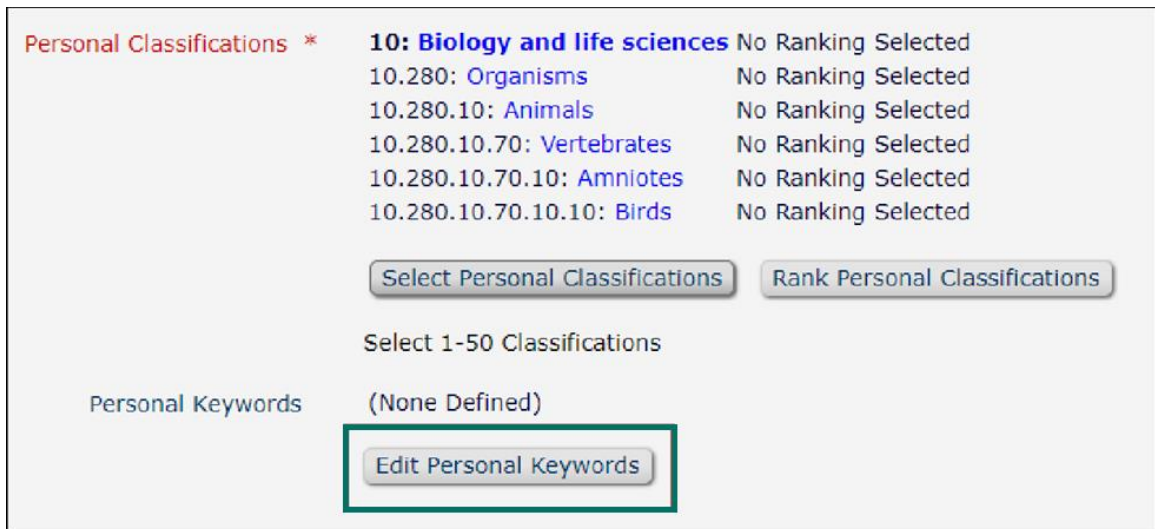
Personal Classifications *	Ranking
10: Biology and life sciences	No Ranking Selected
10.280: Organisms	No Ranking Selected
10.280.10: Animals	No Ranking Selected
10.280.10.70: Vertebrates	No Ranking Selected
10.280.10.70.10: Amniotes	No Ranking Selected
10.280.10.70.10.10: Birds	No Ranking Selected

- a. This will ask you to select terms from a pre-defined taxonomy. You can browse the taxonomy or use the search bar to find and select available terms.

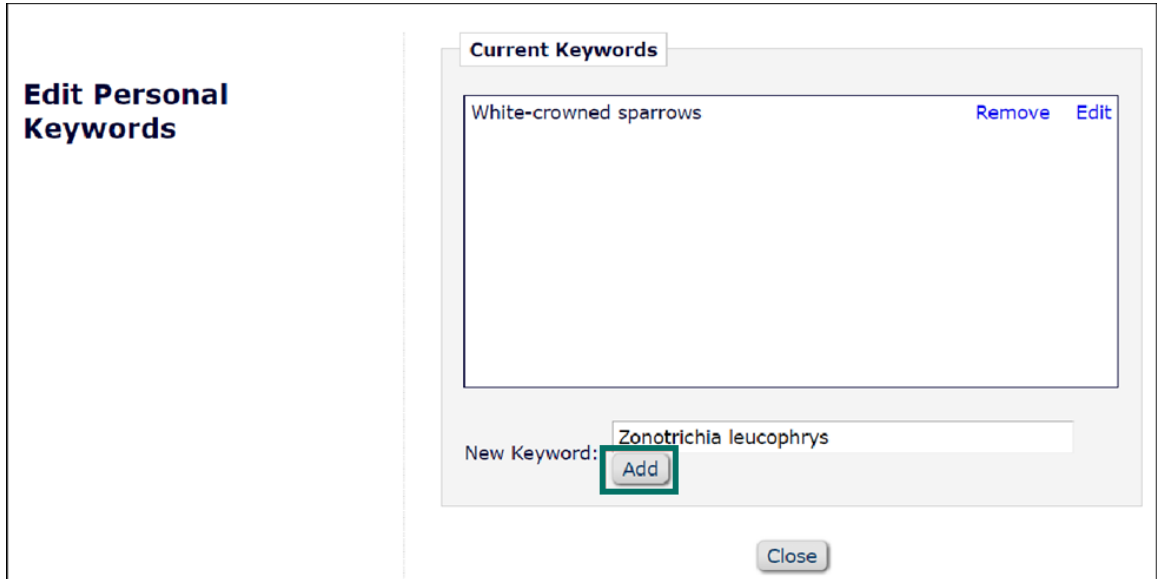
- b. When you've found your term, select it and click **Add ->** to add it to your Selected Classifications. This will also select and add the higher-level terms above them.



- c. You must click **Submit** to save changes.
4. If a term is not available in the Classifications, you can add free-text **Personal Keywords** by clicking the **Edit Personal Keywords** button.



- a. Type free text into the **New Keyword** box then click **Add**.



- b. These terms save as they are added so you can close the window as normal when you are done.

Also on the Update My Information Page

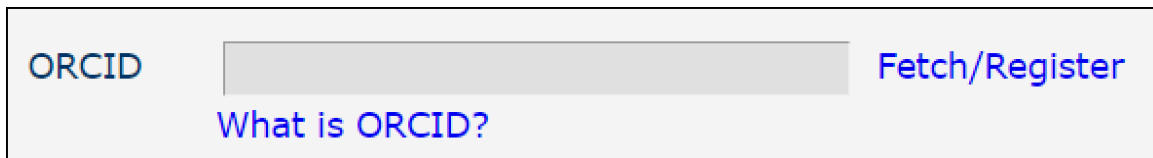
[ORCID](#)

[Personal and Institution Related Information](#)

[Unavailable Dates](#)

ORCID

In the **Personal Information** section you can link your ORCID to your Editorial Manager account. Clicking **Fetch/Register** will open a new window where you can login to ORCID and authorize.



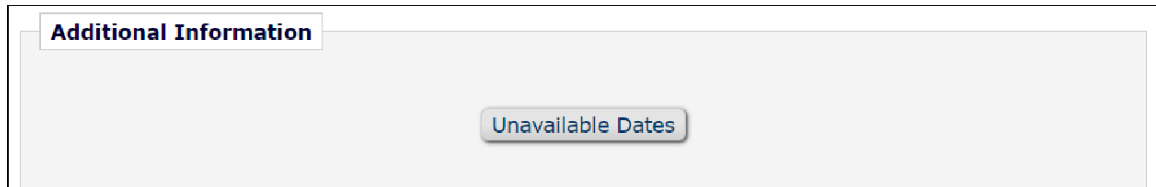
Personal and Institution Related Information

You can update your personal information at any time. Required fields are in red text and have an asterisk next to the label. You must click **Submit** at the bottom of the page to save changes.

Unavailable Dates

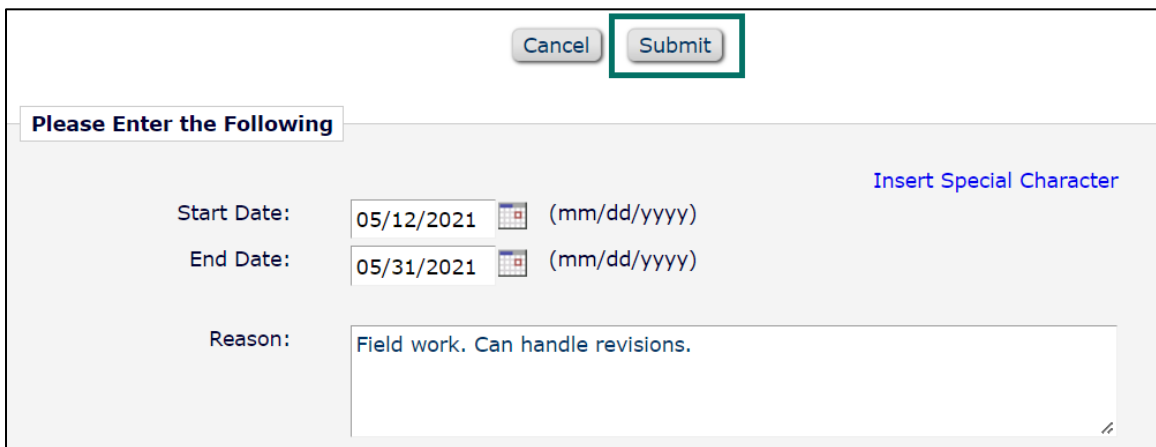
In the **Additional Information** section at the bottom of the page you have the option to select **Unavailable Dates**. Use these when you will be away, very busy, or otherwise unavailable to accept new invitations. Please indicate if you are available to handle the revised submissions you have already been working on.

1. Click **Unavailable Dates**.



A screenshot of a web form section titled "Additional Information". At the bottom center of this section is a button labeled "Unavailable Dates".

2. Click **Add New Unavailable Date**.
3. Add in a **Start Date**, **End Date**, and **Reason**, specifying whether you can handle revisions of your current assignments. You must click **Submit** to save changes. You do not have to enter any substitutes.



A screenshot of the "Add New Unavailable Date" form. At the top right, there are "Cancel" and "Submit" buttons, with "Submit" highlighted by a green box. Below the buttons is a section titled "Please Enter the Following". It contains three fields: "Start Date" with the value "05/12/2021", "End Date" with the value "05/31/2021", and "Reason" with the text "Field work. Can handle revisions." To the right of the date fields is a link "Insert Special Character".

Academic Editor Main Menu

Your **Main Menu** consists of:

[Editor 'To-Do' List](#)

[Submissions with Decisions](#)

[Submissions with \[0/1/2/3/4\] Reviews Completed](#)

[Administrative Functions](#)

Editor 'To-Do' List

This section provides an overview of manuscripts needing action

My Pending Assignments:


[New Invitations](#)

[New Assignments](#)

[Submissions with \[Required Reviews Complete/Requiring Additional Reviewers/One or More Late Reviews\]](#)

[Submissions with Active Discussions](#)

[Reviews in Progress](#)

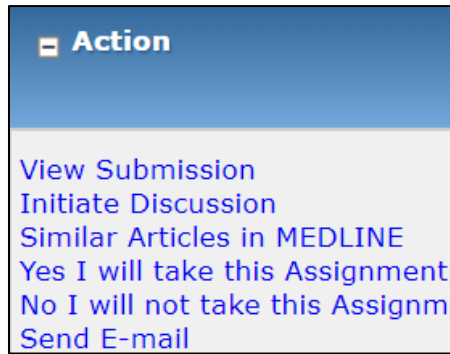
Editor 'To-Do' List 	
My Pending Assignments (7)	
New Invitations (1)	
New Assignments (0)	
Submissions with Required Reviews Complete (0)	
Submissions Requiring Additional Reviewers (1)	
Submissions with One or More Late Reviews (1)	
Submissions with Active Discussions (4)	3
Reviews in Progress (1)	
Reviewers Invited - No Response (1)	
Submissions Under Review (0)	

New Invitations

Typically, you will respond to manuscript invitations directly from your email. You can also accept or decline invitations, as well as read the full submission, from the **New Invitations** page under

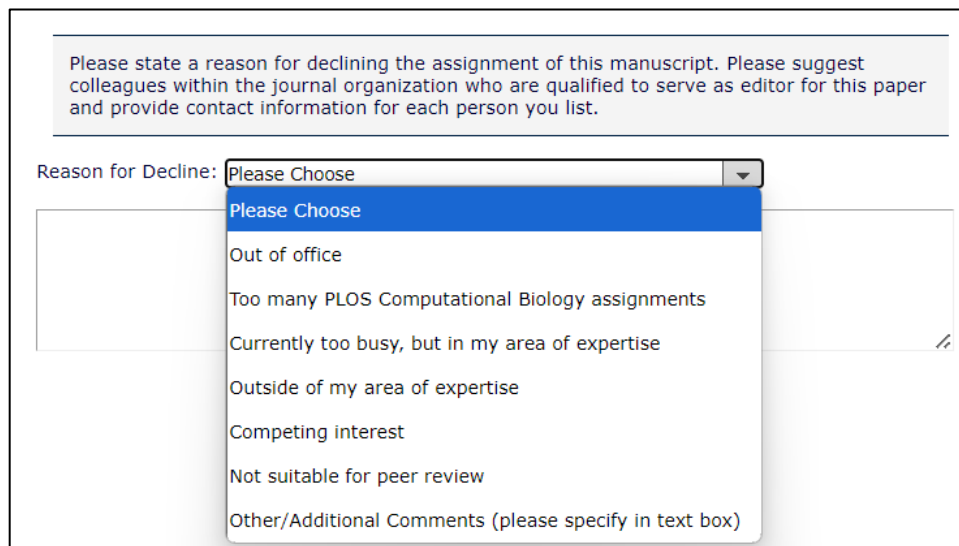
your **Editor 'To-Do' List**.

1. From your **Main Menu** navigate to the **Editor 'To-Do' List** section and click on **New Invitations**
2. Here you will see a list of your pending manuscript invitations.



From here you can:

- a. Click **View Submission** to download the full submission PDF
- b. **Initiate Discussion** if you would like to consult with the Section Editor
- c. Accept an invitation by clicking **Yes I will take this Assignment**
- d. Decline an invitation by clicking **No I will not take this Assignment**
 - i. If you decline the invitation you will be prompted to enter a **Reason for Decline**. Your selection informs the journal about the suitability of invitations, your availability, and next actions on the manuscript.

A screenshot of a web form for declining an assignment. At the top, there is a text box with the instruction: 'Please state a reason for declining the assignment of this manuscript. Please suggest colleagues within the journal organization who are qualified to serve as editor for this paper and provide contact information for each person you list.' Below this is a label 'Reason for Decline:' followed by a dropdown menu. The dropdown menu is open, showing a list of options: 'Please Choose' (highlighted in blue), 'Out of office', 'Too many PLOS Computational Biology assignments', 'Currently too busy, but in my area of expertise', 'Outside of my area of expertise', 'Competing interest', 'Not suitable for peer review', and 'Other/Additional Comments (please specify in text box)'. To the right of the dropdown is a text area for providing additional information.

New Assignments

These are your manuscripts that require an initial action.

Submissions with [Required Reviews Complete / Requiring Additional Reviewers / One or More Late Reviews]

These are your manuscripts organized by the specific status or action needed.

Submissions with Active Discussions

If journal staff or another Editorial Board member would like your input on a submission, they will contact you via a Discussion for the manuscript. You will receive an email notification, which provides a link to the Discussion. You can also access all your open Discussions via the **Submissions with Active Discussions** link. A blue oval will indicate the number of unread Discussions.



Reviews in Progress

These are manuscripts where you have invited (Reviewers Invited – No Response) or secured reviewers (Submissions Under Review) and are awaiting their response or review.

Submissions with Decisions

Navigate to manuscripts for which you have issued a decision.



Submissions with [0/1/2/3/4] Reviews Completed

The image shows a screenshot of a web interface. On the left is a sidebar menu with the following items: Search, Search Submissions, Saved searches, Submissions with (highlighted with a green box), 0 Reviews Completed: 0, 1 Reviews Completed: 0, 2 Reviews Completed: 1, 3 Reviews Completed: 0, 4 Reviews Completed: 0, and Administrative functions. On the right is the 'Editor 'To-Do' List' with the following items: My Pending Assignments (5), New Invitations (0), New Assignments (0), Submissions with Required Reviews Complete (1), Submissions Requiring Additional Reviewers (0), Submissions with One or More Late Reviews (0), and Submissions with Active Discussions (4) with a blue circle containing the number 3.

On the left sidebar menu is an alternate way to view your active assignments based on the status of reviews completed.

Administrative Functions

The image shows a screenshot of a sidebar menu item labeled 'Administrative functions' with a blue arrow pointing up. Below it is a link labeled 'Register New User'.

Also on the leftside menu is the ability to register new reviewers that are not already in the database. However, you will typically register new users from the **Invite Reviewers** page (see [Registering a New Reviewer](#).)

Manuscript Actions

The image shows a screenshot of a dropdown menu titled 'Action' with a red triangle icon. The menu items are: View Submission, Details, Discussions (with a blue circle containing the number 1), History, File Inventory, Classifications, Invite Reviewers, Submit Editor's Decision and Comments, and Send E-mail.

The **Action** menu is where you conduct most of your Academic Editor activities. Further detail about each of these pages can be found below.

[View Submission](#)

[Details](#)

[Discussions](#) – [Initiate a Discussion](#) | [Respond to a Discussion](#)

[Invite Reviewers](#)

[Reviewer Search](#) – [Direct Search](#) | [Web of Science Reviewer Locator](#)

[Registering a New Reviewer](#)

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[View Reviews and Comments](#)


[Submit Editor's Decision and Comments](#)

[Send E-mail](#)

View Submission

Download the full submission PDF. Some particular components to note:

- **Opposed Reviewers** are listed on the first page
- **Additional Information** provided by the authors at submission
 - **Financial Disclosure**
 - **Competing Interests**
 - **Ethics Statement**
 - **Data Availability**
- You can access high-resolution versions of each figure by selecting the blue link at the top of the page each figure appears on.

[Click here to access/download;Figure;Fig 1.tif](#) 

- You can find Supporting Information files and Related Manuscripts (if included) via blue links at the end of the submission PDF.

[Click here to access/download
Supporting Information](#)

Details

This page contains information about the manuscript including authors, keywords, abstract, reviewer statuses, and more.

The journal office may leave specific questions or guidance in the **Information for Editor** section

In the **Reviewers** section you can monitor the status of reviews.

Reviewers	
Name:	[Redacted] (Reviewer)
Review Status:	Review Complete
Date Reviewer Invited:	Feb 10 2021 08:49PM
Date Reviewer Agreed:	Feb 11 2021 12:26AM
Date Review Due:	Mar 13 2021 11:59PM
Date Review Completed:	Feb 12 2021 12:38AM
Elapsed Days:	1
Recommendation:	Major Revision
<hr/>	
Name:	[Redacted] (Reviewer)
Review Status:	Agreed to Review
Date Reviewer Invited:	May 07 2021 08:51PM
Date Reviewer Agreed:	May 10 2021 05:27AM
Date Review Due:	06/09/2021  (mm/dd/yyyy)
Elapsed Days:	6

At the bottom of the **Details** page you will find **Additional Information** provided by the authors ranging from mandatory inputs such as **Competing Interests** to optional **Previous Interactions**.

Discussions

Initiate a Discussion

1. If a paper does not yet have any discussions, click **Initiate Discussion** to open one. If the paper has previous discussions, Initiate Discussion will be replaced with **Discussions** and you will need to click **Start New Topic**.
2. Fill out the **Topic** and then your **Initial Comments**.
3. Once your comments are ready you can add participants via the search function. When you have found the people you are looking for, tick the box next to their name. Then click **Proceed to Customize Letters**.



Do **NOT** select Start Discussion Without Sending Letters. If this is selected the discussion will start but no one will be notified and you may not get a response.

The screenshot shows a user interface for starting a discussion. At the top, there are three buttons: 'Cancel', 'Start Discussion Without Sending Letters', and 'Proceed To Customize Letters'. The 'Start Discussion Without Sending Letters' button is highlighted with a red box and a diagonal line through it, indicating it should not be selected. The 'Proceed To Customize Letters' button is also highlighted with a red box. Below the buttons is a 'Choose Topic Template' dropdown menu with 'Please Choose' selected. Below the dropdown is a form with two fields: 'Topic' and 'Initial Comments'. The 'Initial Comments' field is currently empty and has a mouse cursor over it.

4. Click **Confirm Selections and Proceed** to send the Discussion Invite letter.

Respond to a Discussion

1. You will receive invitations to participate in discussions via email. Click on the link within the email to access your **Submissions with Active Discussions** folder and click on the **Discussions** Action on the manuscript
2. Click **View** to see the conversation and participants
3. Add your **Comments** as needed and click **Post**. (You will also receive an email confirmation of your comments)

History

This page contains a chronological listing of the manuscript's status and correspondence history. It is especially useful if you agree to handle a manuscript that was previously assigned to another Academic Editor or one that was transferred from another PLOS journal.

File Inventory

This page contains all the files included in the submission including the cover letter, manuscript, and figures.

Invite Reviewers

On this page you can search for reviewers, check reviewer invitation statuses, and manage secured reviewers.

[Reviewer Search](#) – [Direct Search](#) | [Web of Science Reviewer Locator](#)
[Registering a New Reviewer](#)

[Sending Reviewer Invitations](#)

[Monitoring Reviewer Invitations](#)

[Re-Inviting Previous Reviewers to a Revised Manuscript](#)

Reviewer Search

Direct Search

Use this method if you have a reviewer in mind, are using an author-suggested reviewer, or found a potential reviewer on an external database.

On the **My Publication** tab you can search by a variety of criteria - the most reliable is email

Search Type

My Publication Web of Science Reviewer Locator

Criterion: Last Name (dropdown) | Is/Is not: is (dropdown) | Selector: Begins With (dropdown) | Value: [input field]

Dropdown menu for Last Name: Last Name, First Name, **E-mail Address**, Position, Department, Institution, City, State, Country or Region, Secondary Last Name, Secondary First Name

Buttons: Add Search Option +, Search

1. If your desired reviewer is in the database, their profile will appear in your search results along with some basic statistics on their past invitations and reviews. If they are not in the database you can [register them](#)

- a. To invite the reviewer, click the **Inv.** box

Inv.	Alt.	Reviewer Name	Board Member	Reviewer Statistics (Agreed Invitations)	Invitation Statistics
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Redacted]	No	Reviews In Progress: 0 Completed Reviews: 4 Un-assigned After Agreeing: 0 Terminated After Agreeing: 0 Last Review Agreed: Feb 14 2015 02:54PM Last Review Completed: Mar 15 2015 09:48PM Last Review Declined: May 15 2015 08:33PM Avg Days Outstanding: 21 Manuscript Rating: 0 Avg Review Rating: 87.5	Date Last Invited: May 18 2015 03:17AM Outstanding Invitations: 0 Agreed: 4 Declined: 5 Un-Invited Before Agreeing: 2 Terminated: 0 Total Invitations: 11

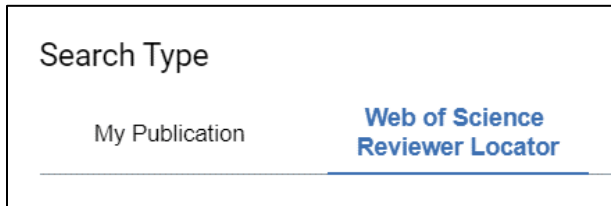
Page: 1 of 1 (1 Total Reviews) Display 10 results per page.

- b. To select the reviewer as an alternate, click the **Alt.** box. Alternate reviewers are automatically invited when invited reviewers decline.
- c. You can continue to find reviewers using the search fields after you make initial selections. EM will remember which reviewers you selected.

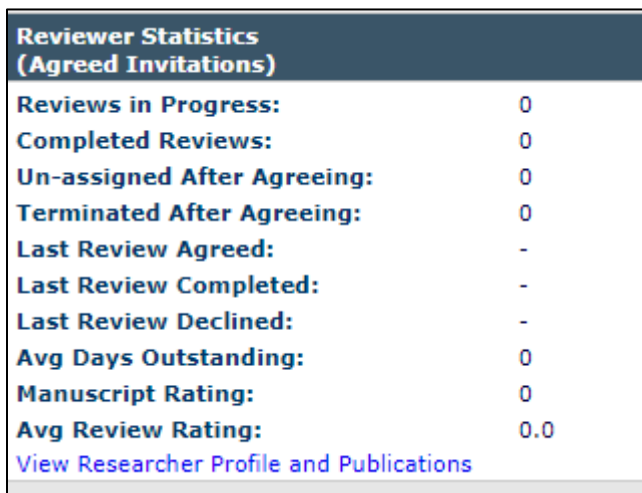
Web of Science Reviewer Locator

The Web of Science Reviewer Locator is a tool to help you find, vet, and invite reviewers.

1. Select the Web of Science Reviewer Locator tab to use the tool.

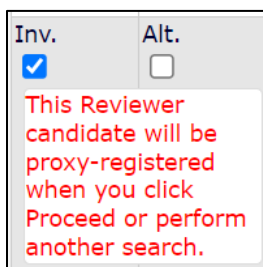


2. The tool will return a list of suggested reviewers from Web of Science databases. Keep in mind that before inviting anyone, you still need to vet them for expertise match, appropriate seniority, and avoid any potential conflicts of interest.
3. If available, click on **View Researcher Profile and Publications** to open a potential reviewer's Web of Science profile in a new window



Reviewer Statistics (Agreed Invitations)	
Reviews in Progress:	0
Completed Reviews:	0
Un-assigned After Agreeing:	0
Terminated After Agreeing:	0
Last Review Agreed:	-
Last Review Completed:	-
Last Review Declined:	-
Avg Days Outstanding:	0
Manuscript Rating:	0
Avg Review Rating:	0.0
View Researcher Profile and Publications	

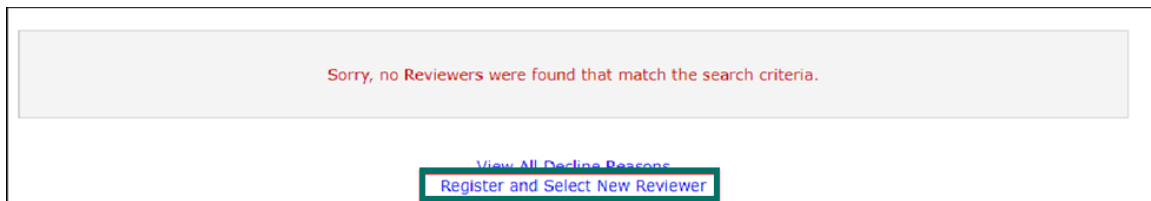
4. To invite a reviewer, check the **Inv.** box. To queue a reviewer as an alternate, check the **Alt.** box.
5. If a reviewer is not in the Editorial Manager database a popup box about proxy registration will appear. You do not need to follow the [Registering a New Reviewer](#) steps below; this is done automatically.



Registering a New Reviewer

Many reviewers will already be in the EM database. However, if they aren't already, you'll need to register the desired reviewer prior to inviting them to review.

1. Click **Register and Select New Reviewer**




Sorry, no Reviewers were found that match the search criteria.

[View All Decline Reasons](#)

[Register and Select New Reviewer](#)

2. Enter the desired reviewer's email address



Register and Select New Reviewer

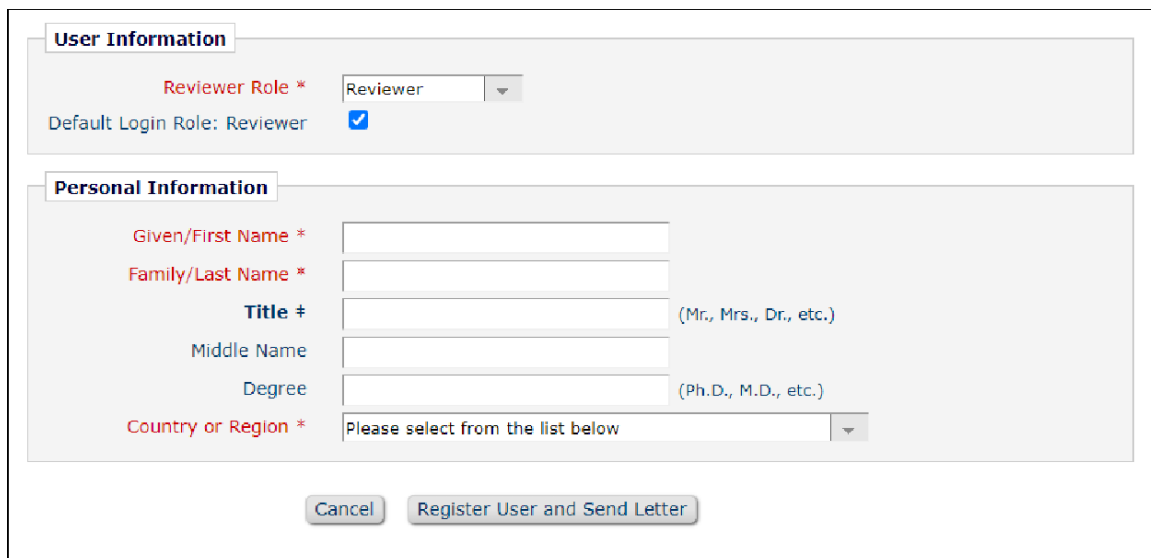
Please enter key information about the person you are registering as a Reviewer.

E-mail Address *

If entering more than one e-mail address, use a semi-colon between each address (e.g., joe@thejournal.com;joe@yahoo.com)
Entering a second e-mail address from a different e-mail provider decreases the chance that SPAM filters will trap e-mails sent to you from online systems. [Read More](#).

[Cancel](#) [Proceed](#)

3. Enter the reviewer's **Personal Information**. All text in red and with an asterisk is required.



User Information

Reviewer Role * Reviewer

Default Login Role: Reviewer

Personal Information

Given/First Name *

Family/Last Name *

Title # (Mr., Mrs., Dr., etc.)

Middle Name

Degree (Ph.D., M.D., etc.)

Country or Region * Please select from the list below

[Cancel](#) [Register User and Send Letter](#)

4. Once complete, select **Register User and Send Letter** and then **Send Letter** to send the proxy registration letter.

Customize Proxy Registration Letter

Editors and publication staff are legally obligated to inform a user when an account has been created on the user's behalf. Click the Send Letter button to send the notification letter.

From: "PLOS ONE" <plosone@plos.org>

To: [Redacted] (proxy registration pending)

Letter Purpose: Proxy Registration Notice to Registrant

Letter Subject: PLOS ONE Registration

Additional recipients can be copied or blind copied by typing their e-mail addresses into the blank boxes next to cc: or bcc: below. Multiple e-mail addresses can be included, separated by semicolons (;).

cc:

bcc:

Letter Body: [Insert Special Character](#) | [Insert Merge Field](#): [Additional Manuscript Details](#)

Dear [Redacted],

You have been registered for the Editorial Manager online submission and peer review tracking system for PLOS ONE because an Academic Editor would like you to review a submission (you will receive a separate review invitation).

Here is your username and confidential password, which you need to access the Editorial Manager at <https://www.editorialmanager.com/pone/>.

Username: %USERNAME%
Password: %PASSWORD%

This temporary password will expire after five days. You can change your password and other personal information by logging into the PLOS ONE website at <https://www.editorialmanager.com/pone/> and clicking on the Update My Information link on the menu.

Best regards,
PLOS ONE

5. You can now select the desired reviewer and proceed to sending invitations

Sending Reviewer Invitations

1. Once you have finished making your selections, click **Proceed**.
2. Here you will see a list of all selected reviewers and alternates. The default **Days to Review** is 10. You may adjust this, if necessary, but we have found that reviewers take an average of 10 days to complete reviews. Reviewers are always able to request extensions if needed.

Reviewers to Invite			
Name	Letter	Days to Review	Do Not Invite
[Redacted] (Reviewer)	Invitation: New Reviewer Customize	10	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. You have the option to **Customize** the default text if you would like to add a personal note to the reviewer.

Reviewers to Invite			
Name	Letter	Days to Review	Do Not Invite
[Redacted] (Reviewer)	Invitation: New Reviewer Customize	10	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Click **Confirm Selections and Proceed**

Monitoring Reviewer Invitations

In the **Review Status** section of the **Invite Reviewers** page you can view the status of the reviewer invitations, view the **Decline Reason** text, and check whether there are any outstanding **Alternate Reviewers**.

Review Status			
Invited Reviewers (18)			
[Redacted] (Reviewer)	Review Complete Feb 17 2023 08:41AM		
[Redacted] (Reviewer)	Reviewer Invited Feb 17 2023 10:04AM		Uninvite Reviewer
[Redacted] (Reviewer)	Reviewer Invited Feb 17 2023 09:56AM		Uninvite Reviewer
[Redacted] (Reviewer)	Reviewer Invited Feb 17 2023 09:46AM		Uninvite Reviewer
[Redacted] (Reviewer)	Reviewer Invited Feb 17 2023 10:02AM		Uninvite Reviewer
[Redacted] (Reviewer)	Reviewer Declined Feb 20 2023 10:35AM	No Reason Entered	Reinvite Reviewer
[Redacted] (Reviewer)	Reviewer Declined Feb 21 2023 06:36PM	View	Reinvite Reviewer

Re-Inviting Previous Reviewers to a Revised Manuscript

1. On the **Previous Reviewers** tab of the **Invite Reviewers** page, click the **Select From Previous Reviewers** button

Search Type			
My Publication	Previous Reviewers	Web of Science Reviewer Locator	
Previous Reviewers (2)			
	Email	Recommendation	
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	Major Revision	View Review
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	Minor Revision	View Review
			Select From Previous Reviewers

2. Select the previous reviewers you would like to re-invite then click **Proceed**

Page: 1 of 1 (2 total Reviewers)

Select As		Reviewer Name
Inv.	Alt.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Redacted] (Reviewer) [Redacted] This publication: (This person reviewed the previous version as Reviewer 2)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Redacted] (Reviewer) [Redacted] This publication: (This person reviewed the previous version as Reviewer 1)

- The appropriate letter template will already be selected, which you may customize as necessary

Letter
Invitation: Previous Reviewer on Revision ▼ Customize

- Once you are ready, click **Confirm Selections and Proceed** to re-invite the selected previous reviewers

View Reviews and Comments

On this page you can view the reviewers, their recommendations and comments, decision letters, response to reviewers, and any reviews uploaded as attachments.

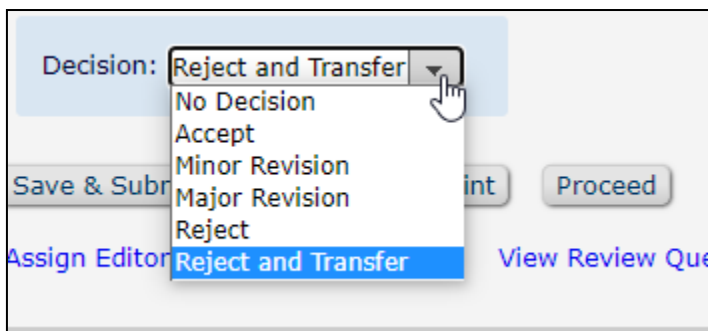
Attachments (1) View Manuscript Rating Card View Review Question Responses		
	Revision 1	Original Submission
(Reviewer 1)	(None)	Minor Revision
(Reviewer 2)	(None)	Accept
(Reviewer 3)	Accept	Major Revision
(Reviewer 4)	Major Revision	(None)
(Academic Editor)		Minor Revision (Decision Rescinded: Accept)
Author Decision Letter		Minor Revision
(Author)		Response to Reviewers

To view the reviewer comments, click the suggested decision type for each reviewer individually. This will show the completed reviewer form for that reviewer. These comments - except for the recommended decision - are automatically pulled into your decision letter.

Submit Editors Decision and Comments

It is on this page that you will issue your Decision. You are also able to access the same content as the **View Reviews and Comments** page (e.g. reviewer comments)

1. Select your decision type at the top of the page then click **Proceed**. You do not need to type anything in the **Confidential Comments to Editor** nor the **Comments to Author** section. You will add your Academic Editor comments in the decision letter.



If you select **Reject and Transfer** you will also have to select [which PLOS journal](#) you are recommending transfer to.

2. The next page shows the draft decision letter with reviewer Comments to the Author. Click **Proceed** once more, which will take you to the decision letter.
3. In the **Modify Letter** dropdown you can select the appropriate template letter and add your own comments. You must add context to your editorial decision and not just pass on the reviewers comments.

4. Once complete, click **Submit Decision with Draft Letter**. The letter will go to the Section Editor for approval before being sent to the author

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On this page you can send ad hoc emails to any of the manuscript's contributors or the journal office. Select the desired letter, then click **Customize Letter** to open, customize as necessary, and send the letter.

